

**Claim Amendments**

Please cancel claims 1 – 23, without prejudice.

Please amend claim 24 as follows:

24. (currently amended) A surgical needle having reduced penetration force comprising:

a surgical needle having an acid-treated surface; and

a silicone-containing coating on at least a portion of the acid treated

surface,

wherein ~~whereby~~ the surgical needle has a penetration force on a fifth pass through microporous polyurethane member of about 0.042 inches thickness that is at least 10% less than the penetration force on a fifth pass through a microporous polyurethane member of about 0.042 inches thickness of a needle having the same silicone-containing coating on the same surgical needle having no surface that is acid treated.

25. (original) A surgical needle as in claim 24 wherein the silicone-containing coating comprises an aminoalkyl siloxane.

26. (original) An article of manufacture as in claim 24 wherein the silicone-containing coating comprises an interpenetrating network.

27. (original) An article of manufacture as in claim 24 wherein the silicone-containing coating comprises a copolymer of an aminoalkyl siloxane and a second siliconization material.